

Wild & Scenic River Evaluation Process



Forest Plan Revision Wild and Scenic River Assessment

Updated 6/25/2017



The planning rule requires that, when developing a plan or plan revision, the Responsible Official shall:

“Identify the eligibility of rivers for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, unless a systematic inventory has been previously completed and documented, and there are no changed circumstances that warrant additional review.”

[36 CFR sec. 219.7(c)(2)(vi)]

Determine Eligibility

To be eligible for inclusion, a river segment must be free-flowing and, in combination with its adjacent land area, possess one or more outstandingly remarkable values.

Determine Classification

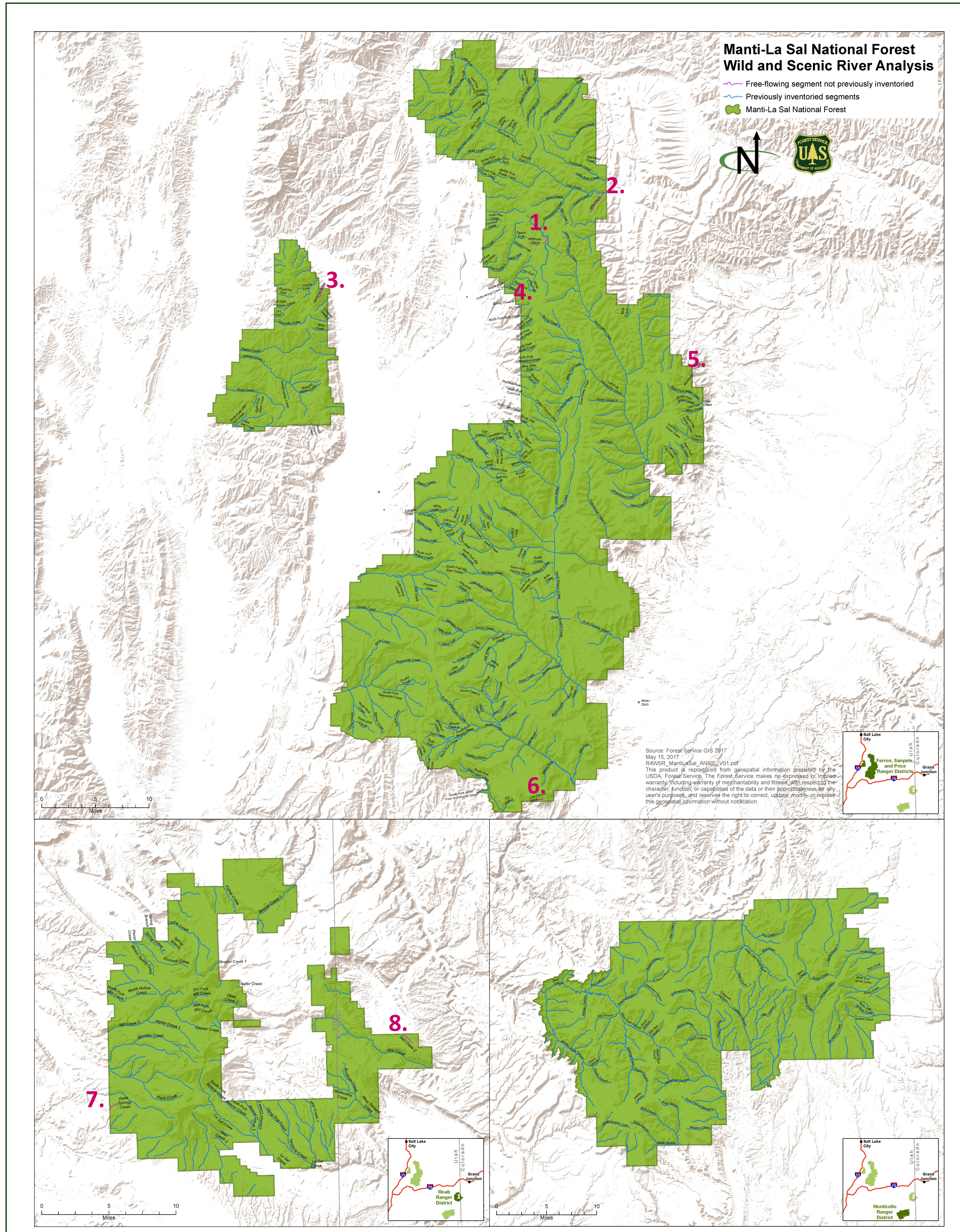
Each river found to be eligible must be assigned a preliminary classification. The preliminary classification of a river found to be eligible is based on the condition of the river and the development level of adjacent lands as they exist at the time of the study. Section 2(b) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act specifies and defines three classification categories for eligible rivers: (1) Wild Rivers, (2) Scenic Rivers (3) Recreational Rivers.

Determine Suitability

A suitability study provides the basis for determining which eligible rivers or river segments should be recommended to Congress as potential additions to the National System. The content of a suitability study is described in section 83.3 of the WSR Handbook (Chapter 80 of FSH 1909.12).

Agency Recommendation/ Designation

Once a final agency determination that a river is suitable for inclusion in the System has been made and documented, a notification letter documenting the recommendation will be prepared by the Chief for submittal to Congress. This letter should be forwarded to Congress by the Secretary of Agriculture. Rivers are designated as part of the National System as specified in section 2(a) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act through: (1) An Act of Congress. (2) Secretary of Interior.



Manti-La Sal WSR analysis

2008 Effort

The Forest previously conducted WSR eligibility studies in 2008 as part of a larger analysis covering all National Forests in Utah. In 2008, the Forest signed a decision determining that there were no river segments suitable for WSR designation on the Manti-La Sal NF under the existing criteria. Since then, new criteria has been given for evaluating WSRs; this includes the source map type for identifying river segments.

Integrating the 2008 effort to the current Effort

Under the new planning rule, river segments that were reviewed in a previous systematic inventory, like the 2008 effort, do not have to be re-evaluated. However, due to new criteria with the new planning rule, we compared 2008 NHD source maps with the 7.5 minute USGS quad maps to identify any river segments not included in the 2008 evaluations. The resulting 8 river segments will be reviewed concurrent with the Forest Plan Revision effort.

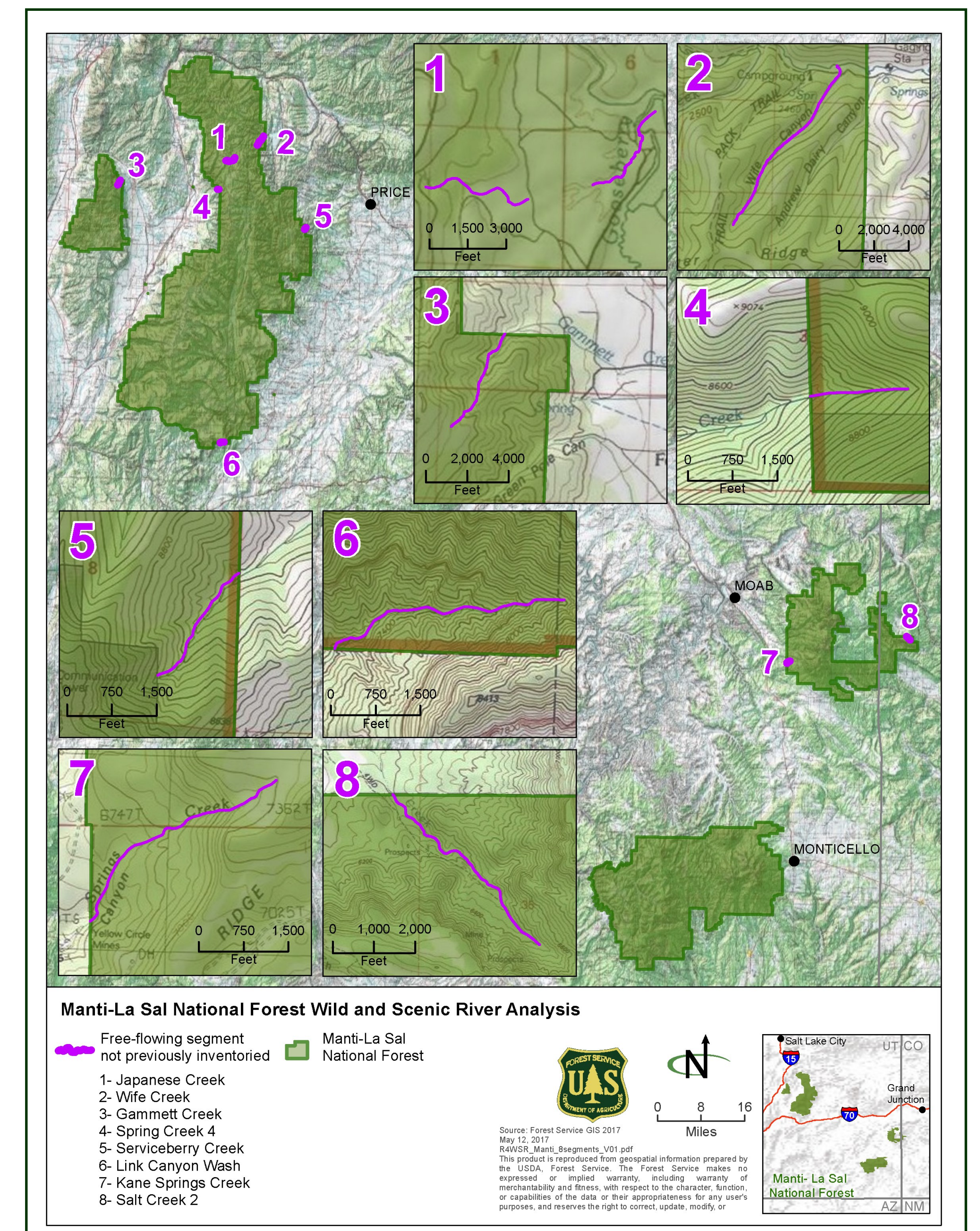
What's Next—2017 Effort

⇒ Forest Service staff partnered with USGS to update NHD by compared the two datasets so NHD matched with the 7.5 minute quad.

⇒ To determined what rivers were not inventoried in 2008, named rivers in the NHD at the 7.5 minute resolution were compared and reviewed (are these rivers free-flowing or not?)

⇒ 8 River segments were identified as not being evaluated during the 2008 effort and will move forward to be evaluated for eligibility/ classification/suitability.

Starting July 1 there will be a 30-day comment period for WSR and the 8– identified segments.



Additional Information

For additional information on the process, and the criteria used during the WSR analysis reference FSH 1909.12—LAND MANAGEMENT PLANNING HANDBOOK Chapter 80— Wild and Scenic Rivers.

Visit the WSR sub-page to view additional documentation and status of the Manti– La Sal WSR process.

For updates on our Plan Revision effort, visit our StoryMap website (<http://bit.do/manti-lasalplanrevision>) or Planning page (<http://bit.do/mlsnfplanningpage>). You can also contact the Plan Revision Team with questions at mlnfplanrevision@fs.fed.us; by phone at 435-636-3508; or via postal mail at 599 West Price River Drive, Price, Utah 84501.